



## May 14-15, 2020 -- "Don't look over here" -- while the world is preoccupied with a pandemic, Israeli-Saudi Axis takes advantage

publication date: May 14, 2020

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### Jerusalem and Riyadh

Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo** paid a quick visit to Israel on May 13 to give the Trump administration's green light to Israeli plans to annex large swathes of the **West Bank** as early as next month. Pompeo met with Israeli Prime Minister **Binyamin Netanyahu** and his new coalition partner and former political foe, Defense Minister **Benny Gantz**.

Pompeo was to have discussed the Israeli annexation with U.S. ambassador to Israel and **Donald Trump's** former bankruptcy lawyer **David Friedman**, a strong supporter of the Israeli annexation, but the ambassador was diagnosed with "mild upper respiratory symptoms" and he was urged to keep his distance from Pompeo, who arrived in Israel wearing a red, white, and blue face mask.



Pompeo said the Israeli decision on annexation belongs to Netanyahu and Gantz alone, adding that they have a right to make it. Pompeo made it a point of not meeting with any representative of the **Palestinian Authority**. The Trump administration severed all diplomatic ties with the Palestinians in 2017.

Annexation of the West Bank is a key component of Jared Kushner's "peace plan." Although Kushner failed to discuss any aspect of his peace plan with the Palestinians, the plan has the backing of Saudi Crown Prince and Kushner friend **Mohammed bin Salman (MbS)**. In addition to selling out the Palestinian cause, MbS began arresting 68 **Palestinian** and **Jordanian** residents of **Saudi Arabia** in February 2019, charging them in March of this year with supporting the Palestinian **Hamas** movement. The Palestinians and Jordanians were charged before a "**special terrorism court**" in Riyadh and not afforded any legal representation. Among those arrested was retired physician **Dr. Mohammed al-Khudari**, 81, Hamas's former official representative in Riyadh.

MbS's actions against Palestine and in support of Israel are not merely limited to supporting Israeli annexation of the West Bank and arresting Hamas supporters in



Saudi Arabia. He recently began pressuring African nations that have outstanding financial debts to Saudi Arabia to recognize Israel or face economic pressure from Riyadh. The targets for Saudi threats correspond to a map Netanyahu showed to U.S. Jewish leaders in 2019 illustrating African nations that either maintained or lacked relations with Israel. The map

indicated that Israel had previously established relations with **Djibouti** and **Somalia**, two members of the Arab League.

Among those being forced by MbS to choose between recognizing Israel and supporting the Palestinians by withholding recognition of the Jewish state are **Mohamed Ould Ghazouani**, the president of **Mauritania**; **Abdelmadjid Tebboune**, the president of **Algeria**; **Kais Saied**, the president of **Tunisia**; **Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman Burhan**, the chairman of the Sovereignty Council of **Sudan**; **Ibrahim Boubacar Keita**, the president of **Mali**; and **Mahamadou Issoufou**, the president of **Niger**.

Kushner and his Israeli business associates have reportedly invested in African mining operations in **Guinea**, **Sierra Leone**, **Angola**, **Democratic Republic of Congo**, and **Liberia**.

There have also been reports emanating from the Middle East that MbS is acting as a go-between for the establishment of formal relations between Israel and the predominantly Muslim nations of **Pakistan**, **Bangladesh**, **Indonesia**, **Malaysia**, and **Brunei**. Two of these, Pakistan and Indonesia, maintain low-level commercial relations with Israel.

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